

REMARKS

This Office Action has been carefully considered.

It is noted that the claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(B) over the European Patent 655,373.

Also, the claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 and objected to.

Also, the drawings are objected to.

In connection with formal objections or rejections, it is believed that the lateral struts (60, 64, 70) are clearly shown in the drawings, as well as two side walls having numerous ends. The claims here have been amended as suggested by the Examiner.

It is therefore believed that the Examiner's grounds for the formal objections or rejections are eliminated.

It is also submitted that the present invention as defined in the claims patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

As disclosed in the specification, the inventive bearing element can be used for wiper rods with two different widths, namely 8 and 9 mm, and two different material thicknesses, namely 3 and 4 mm. Because of its greater material thickness of 4 mm, the

wiper rod has a greater bending radius of its hook-shaped end. The bearing element is guided on the sides, in particular on the legs, of the hook-formed end. For this purpose, the side walls at one side of the hub have a clearance which corresponds to the greater width of the wiper rod, while the side walls at the side located diametrically opposite to the hub have a clearance which corresponds to the smaller widths of the wiper rod as explained in the specification. For mounting of wiper rods with different widths, the bearing element is turned by 180° around the hub as illustrated for example on Fig. 7.

Turning now to the reference and particularly to the European Patent Document EP 0 655 373 A1, it can be seen that the bearing element disclosed in this reference allows the mounting of two different wiper rods (38) and (38'), which differ with respect to their thicknesses E and E' and their bending radii (42) and (42'). These features correspond to the features of the applicant's invention. For improved guidance between the both inner surfaces (16) of the side walls (12), the wiper rods with their hook-shaped ends must have the same widths, as identified by the dash-dot lines in Figure 2 of the reference.

In contrast, in accordance with the bearing element of the inventive solution, a further wiper rod type can be mounted in a second mounting position, which wiper rod type has a smaller width and is guided between guiding surfaces at another end of the bearing part, which has a smaller clearance. By designing the inventive bearing element which makes possible a further mounting position for a smaller, thinner wiping rod shown in Figure 7, the bearing element is suitable not only for two, but for three wiper rod types.

The reference applied by the Examiner does not contain any hint or suggestion for a person who is not skilled in the art how the known bearing element can be changed for performing the further functions. The Examiner's statements without specific technical features would not help a person skilled in the art.

Applicants agree with the statements made by the Examiner on page 6 of the Office Action, up to the last paragraph. In accordance with the applicant's opinion, the wiper rods (38), (38') are guided between the inner guiding surfaces (16) and the side walls (14). The inner surfaces (16) end where the surfaces (24) [Figure 1] begin. The surfaces (24) have a greater distance A2 from one another, as compared with a distance A1 of the guiding surfaces (16). They serve however not for guidance of the wiper rods (38), (38'), since they do not butt against them at any time. Also, they do not allow mounting of wiper rods of different widths.

The Examiner's statement with respect to Claim 2 can be understood. In accordance with Claim 2, the clearance of the side walls at one end is reduced by beads. If one accepts the analysis of the Examiner in his statement that the surfaces (24) are beads in the sense of the present invention, then the clearance A2 formed by the surfaces (24) is not reduced but instead is increased when compared with the clearance A1 formed by the guiding surfaces (16). This can be clearly concluded from Figures 1 and 2.

In statement in the last paragraph on page 6 is only partially correct, since the struts (58) is not flattened, but instead is plain. If they were flattened, there would be

regions which are not plane. For the operation of the invention, these regions are important since they form contact surfaces (66) for the small wiper rod. Moreover, the transverse strut (58) in the European reference does not have a contact surface for a small wiper rod with a hook-shape end, with a small bending radius and a small material thickness.

As for Claim 6 of the present invention, an additional lateral strut (70) is arranged at the ends of the sidewalls. In contrast, the bearing element of the European patent has a transverse strut (40) only on one end. This bearing element therefore does not present so many options as the inventive bearing element, and it cannot be mounted by turning around 180°.

The statement that the further transverse strut (70) of Claim 6 is not shown in the drawings is not understandable, since Figures 2 – 7 show the strut (70). Since the additional transverse struts (70) are transverse struts which connect the side walls, it is clearly defined in Claim 1 without the special positions specified in Claim 6.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the above listed claims define the features we cannot disclose in the reference and cannot be derived from it as a matter of obviousness.

Therefore, these claims shall be considered as patentably distinguishable over the art and should be allowed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application is most respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects in order to place this case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment, and the case be passed to issue. Any costs involved should be charged to the deposit account of the undersigned (No. 19-4675). Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned (at 631-549-4700).

Respectfully submitted,

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